

leadership decides—an energy bill ought to be on the President's desk waiting for his signature. Any less performance than that is an inadequate performance on the part of the Congress.

I think we do have that opportunity. The reason we have a colleague on the floor saying he wants to put one on the Defense authorization bill is to cause the leadership of the Senate not to stonewall the issue but to give us a time certain when that issue can come to the floor.

#### THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Mr. CRAIG. If I could for a few moments talk about something that is near and dear to my heart, that is public lands. My State of Idaho is 63-percent public land. Last Saturday was a time for all Americans to recognize the value we have in our public lands and a time for all of us to give a little something back, by volunteering a Saturday to lend a helping hand to improve our public lands. Last Saturday was National Public Lands Day.

This year, National Public Lands Day focused on "Keeping the Promise" by asking Americans to come together to improve the nation's largest resource, our public lands, and to honor the work and sacrifice of the members of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

They are unsung heroes who built over 800 of America's national and state parks.

Between 1933 and 1942, 3.5 million Corps members planted almost 4 billion trees, and they built parks, roads, and hiking trails.

They laid the foundation for the public lands system that America enjoys today.

This year the Corps held their final national reunion on National Public Lands Day.

The ceremony remembered the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corp at Virginia's Shenandoah National Park, and the Corps Alumni symbolically passed the responsibility of caring for public lands to a new generation of concerned citizens.

This year, this new generation totaled approximately 50,000 volunteers, who took some of their precious time and performed over a million dollars worth of improvements to our public lands.

I believe National Public Lands Day is an opportunity to build a sense of ownership by Americans—through personal involvement and conservation education.

In recognition of National Public Lands Day and this sense of ownership we should all have for our public lands, I want to spend a few minutes today and reflect on the value of our public lands and on what the future holds for them.

There are around 650 million acres of public lands in the United States. This represents a major portion of our total land mass.

However, most of these lands are concentrated in the West, where as much as 82 percent of a state can be comprised of Federal land. In fact, 63 percent of my own home state of Idaho is owned by the Federal Government.

This can be beneficial, as our public lands have a lot to offer.

For starters, there is a great deal of resources available on our public lands—from renewable forests to opportunities to raise livestock to oil and minerals beneath the surface—public lands hold a great deal of the resources we all depend on and that allow us to enjoy the abundant lives we live in this country.

Having resources available on public lands affords us the opportunity for a return on those resources to help fund government services, from schools to roads to national defense, and ease the burden on taxpayers.

Just as important, though, is the recreation opportunities our public lands offer.

Every day, people hike and pack into the solitude of wilderness areas, climb rocks, ski, camp, snowmobile, use off-road vehicles, hunt, fish, picnic, boat, swim, and the list goes on of the abundance of recreation on these marvelous lands.

Because the lands are owned by all of us, the opportunity has existed for everyone to use the land within reasonable limits.

However, times are changing. We are in the midst of a slow and methodical attack on our access to public lands.

It started with the resources industries. It will not stop there.

At the same time some radical groups are fighting to halt all resource management on our public lands, they are working to restrict and, in some cases, eliminate human access to our public lands for recreation.

Yes, we must manage our public lands responsibly, which includes restrictions on some activities in some areas.

What we must not do is unreasonably restrict or eliminate certain activities.

Some people like to hike in backcountry areas where they can find peace and solitude while others prefer to ride ATVs into the wilderness.

Some prefer to camp in more developed facilities while others prefer primitive spots.

The point is that recreational opportunities on our public lands should be as diverse as the American public's interest.

On the same note, we can use the natural resources we need in an environmentally responsible manner and still have plenty of opportunities to recreate.

In fact, recreation resource, and environmental interests can team together to help each other out. In my own State of Idaho, on the Nez Perce National Forest, representatives of these interests and many others have come together though a stewardship project.

These groups are working with the Forest Service to implement a project

that works for everyone and addresses all of their needs in some fashion.

In order to achieve such success, each group has had to compromise to agree on a prescription that works for everyone. No one gets their way all of the time.

This is just one example of differing interests working together to help each other out and improve the opportunities on our public lands for everyone and to secure a sound environment.

We need to see more of this around the country.

Public land management has become embroiled in fights, appeals, and litigation. The result is that the only ones who are winning are those who want to ensure we don't use our public lands.

This must stop. Differing interests have to come together and realize that we all have one common goal—use of the land in a responsible and environmentally sound manner.

We can not continue to make the same mistakes of the past on these marvelous public lands.

That being said, I would like each of my colleagues to think about how public lands benefit their State and how they might work to support the new generation of Americans who are just beginning to find the wonders of our public lands.

Last Saturday was National Public Lands Day, and many walked upon those lands and rode water equipment on the lakes of those lands. Some even cut down a few trees to make a home or to provide saw timber to a sawmill. Some were herding cattle on the public lands of Idaho, taking them from the summer range to the fall range and heading them home for the winter season. Soon many will be hunting on the public lands of the West—hunting the elusive elk, or the deer, or other forms of wildlife species that are abundant and managed both in balanced and purposeful ways.

That is the great story of our Nation's public lands. It is not simply to lock them up and look at them, to call them, as medieval Europe once used to call them, "the King's land." The lands of the public are not the King's lands, and they are not the Government's lands; they are the people's lands.

These lands must be managed in a way that ensures their environmental integrity while allowing all Americans to enjoy them in their lifetime and in their style.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, since we were unable to reach agreement on a